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Annotated article by George Metz to Birmingham News, 29 September 1962

George Metz

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10 Birmingham News
Birmingham, Ala.

Sender: George Metz

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Oxford, Miss., Sept. 29 --- The key which the Justice Department must use to unlock the doors of Ole Miss for Negro James Meredith may well be one drawn gun.

And after two weeks of hoopalaa here and at Jackson, this ~~hoopalaa~~ bothers many Mississippi lawmen, who themselves carry guns and say they believe in segregation strong enough to use them.

Despite denials by both Attorney ~~Gen~~ General Robert Kennedy and state officials that a compromise has been reached, rumors ^{persist} still that some agreement has been made between the Justice Department and Gov. Ross Barnett concerning the Meredith case.

~~Gradier~~

Some credence is given to the rumors by reports circulated among peace officers that all ~~the~~ marshals must do to bring Meredith onto the Ole Miss campus is to "pull a gun."

Lt. Gov. Paul Johnson, who addressed ~~some~~ approximately 100 sheriffs, deputies, and other peace officers Thursday afternoon shortly before Meredith and an escort of U.S. marshals were to have arrived at Oxford, instructed the lawmen to let the marshals pass if they drew guns. ~~State Highway Patrolmen received similar instructions.~~

"We will have then won our fight," Johnson was quoted as ~~saying~~ saying to sheriffs.

~~However~~

MORE

②
Highway Patrolmen received similar instructions.

Earlier ~~officers~~ Patrolmen, who wore steel helmets and carried gas masks and night ~~sticks~~ sticks had been told to meet force with force. The only federal "invasion" they had been instructed to stand aside for was United States troops.

However, the ~~Federal~~ Justice Department does not wish to send troops ~~into~~ into Mississippi to force Meredith's entry into the all-white University of Mississippi. Neither does the state wish to close Ole Miss, or --- almost as bad --- have its colleges and universities lose their accreditation. ~~And if federal troops enter the university, there would be a further strife here could result in one or both.~~

Therefore, Uncle Sam and Mississippi both have ^{sound} reason for ~~negotiating~~ negotiating some "peace treaty." The Justice Department and the Kennedy administration, which made a campaign promise to southern states that federal troops would not be sent to the south to force integration, reportedly wants desperately to get Meredith admitted to Ole Miss --- and "save face" --- without doing so at point of a ~~bayonet~~ bayonet.

~~On the other hand, the lawmen are disgruntled about the entry of~~

Some lawmen, disgruntle ~~with~~ about instructions to

XXXXXX

MORE

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~~XXXX~~ let the marshals through if they come armed, complain ~~that~~ this ---
~~XXXX~~ especially if a "deal" has been worked ~~out~~ out between state
and federal authorities ~~T~~ makes ~~xxx~~ a farce and "political show"
out of earlier resistance.

One ~~xxxxxx~~ veteran officer called the present
Meredith crisis ~~is~~ "just a political show by both sides." He ~~said~~ ^{predicted}
Meredith would ~~be admitted~~ be admitted if and when ~~Kennedyxxxxxx~~
Att. Gen. Kennedy agreed to ~~xxxxxx~~ order Chief U. S. Marshal
James McShane to draw his gun on Gov. Barnett, Lt. Gov. Johnson or
~~whatever~~ which ever state official ^{not blocked} ~~stood~~ in his ~~own~~ path ~~which~~
~~next trip to register Meredith.~~

~~last announced registration attempt~~
said pending Thursday afternoon during Meredith's
However, such an ~~xxxxxx~~ agreement would be
a dangerous gamble on part of the Justice Department.

Should McShane draw his gun on Barnett, and a riot
result, Mississippi ~~xxxxxx~~ authorities could blame any possible bloodshed
on federal authorities. *This would be a worse blackeye*
than U.S. TROOPS arriving.

Further credence is given to rumors of the "draw gun
agreement" by the fact that Meredith ~~xxxxxx~~ and marshals turned back
to Memphis Thursday afternoon after a crowd ~~xxxxxx~~ estimated at between
1,000 to 1,500 students and townspeople gathered ~~xxxxxx~~ to watch the
entrance attempt. Approximately 1,000 students were on hand Sept. 20
to boo and jeer Meredith as he and two unarmed marshals confronted
Gov. Barnett ~~xxxxxx~~ during his first registration attempt here.

MORE

④
Also, it was never satisfactorily explained why Highway Patrolmen were suddenly sent home Thursday after the scheduled entrance attempt by Meredith and Co. was cancelled.

Patrolmen had manned massive roadblocks at all campus entrances for more than a week. Moments before being ordered ^{en masse} out of Oxford, they had worn ~~gas masks and helmets~~ steel helmets and carried gas masks and night sticks as if dressed for pitch ^{ed} hand-to-hand combat.

However, both Friday and Saturday not a single uniformed Patrolmen, other than ~~the~~ resident patrolmen, was spotted in Oxford. Yet sheriffs still in the area Friday morning were requested by Gov. Barnett to remain on "stand by basis" ~~at the~~ at the campus. Other than being advised they would be notified if Meredith attempted ~~this, along with~~ to enter, the sheriffs remained in the dark as to the next move plotted by state officials. A "next play", which had come fast and ~~furiously~~ furious all week, never came.

Also, as one sheriff observed: ~~"Meredith"~~ Meredith could ride in here in a taxi by himself and register."

~~Not a single entrance was apparently being watched.~~

Not a single entrance was apparently being watched. Meanwhile, Gov. Barnett was found guilty of civil contempt of federal court and ordered arrested and fined \$10,000 a day unless he purges himself of contempt charges.

He was given until 11 a. m. Tuesday by the United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals at New Orleans to act. Stipulations of the court were that he stop all resistance to court orders admitting

MORE

(5)
Also, he
Meredith. ~~and~~ must maintain law and order at the university and cooperate
with federal authorities ~~attorneys~~ who have been turned away three times
in attempting to register Meredith.

Meredith entry, even with a token display of armed
force, could be sufficient to purge Gov. Barnett of contempt and still
leave him ~~untarnished~~ the untarnished hero of the twentieth century
in Mississippi, and perpetuated in politics ^{for} as long as he lives.

In any event, the final showdown is ~~not~~ expected
Monday or Tuesday at latest. ^{the last vanguard of} Sheriffs, who also left the university
campus ~~Saturday~~ mid-morning Saturday, were instructed to return either
Sunday night or early Monday morning.